



WITHOUT PROPS – PART 1

The examples listed in this section can be adapted and used as a point of reference to inspire Scouts, open their eyes, and/or get them thinking.

1. ACHIEVING A GOAL

- Have you ever had an assignment or task that was so large that you were overwhelmed with the size of it and didn't know where to begin? When you are faced with such a task, ask yourself this question, "If you had to eat an elephant, how would you approach it?" The answer is simple: One bite at a time. Just like eating an elephant, you would go about doing the big assignment one bite at a time.
- Whether it's climbing to the top of a mountain or advancing to the next rank in Scouting, when we're faced with large and complicated task, we should plan our action, get started, and take one step at a time. Sure, we can keep our eye on the prize; but we need to remember that when there's such a long path to travel, we can proceed little by little, step by step, one bite at a time. In this way, with persistence and dedication, eventually we'll achieve our goal.

2. AIM HIGH

- The greatest waste of our natural resources is the number of people who never achieve their potential. Get out of that slow lane. Shift into the fast lane. If we think we can't, we won't. If we think we can, there's a good chance we will. Just making the effort will make us feel like a new person.
- Reputations are made by searching for things that others say can't be done and doing them. Aim low: boring. Aim high: soaring.

3. ASPENS

- Philmont Scout Ranch in northern New Mexico has some of the prettiest and most majestic scenery you'll ever be surrounded by. One outstanding site is hiking near a huge groves of aspen trees. If you've ever seen a grove of aspens wave in a breeze, you have witnessed their strength and beauty. A grove of aspens can withstand the mighty forces of nature because they are tightly bound together, both in their trunks and limbs, and in their root systems. Each tree draws strength from the others. However, one aspen standing alone would soon split or break in the force of a big wind.
- Your patrol is a lot like a grove of aspens. The strength and

teamwork of a group of guys can accomplish tasks that would be impossible for individuals working independently. Each patrol member brings skills and talents that compliment the other members of the patrol.

4. ATTITUDE

- Words could never adequately convey how great the impact our attitude can have on our lives. In many respects, life is 10 percent what happens to us and 90 percent how we respond to it.
 - I remember, when I was a Scout, peering out from my tent at our patrol leader on a very rainy morning. We had no dining fly, and he was cooking breakfast over a smokey fire. He was sopping wet. I recall noticing how drops of rain were dripping down off his hair as he mixed around the well-done scrambled eggs and water in the frying pan. What I also recall was the smile on his face. Cooking away in the smoke and the rain, he was actually cheerful! He could have chosen to be completely upset, but he hadn't, and his marked cheerfulness affected me and our entire patrol.
 - One of the most significant decisions we can make on a day-to-day basis is our choice of attitude. Attitude can keep us going or cripple our progress. It's our attitude that either fuels our fire or assaults our hope. When our attitudes are right, there's no barrier too wide, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, and no challenge too great.
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5. The BEAR AND THE TWO TRAVELERS

- Two men were traveling together, when a bear suddenly met them on their path. One of them climbed up quickly into a tree and concealed himself in the branches. The other, seeing that he must be attacked, fell flat on the ground, and when the bear came up and felt him with his snout, and smelt him all over, he held his breath, and feigned the appearance of death as much as he could. The bear soon left him, for it is said bears will not touch a dead body.
- When the bear was quite gone, the other Traveler descended from the tree, and jocularly inquired of his friend what it was the bear had whispered in his ear. "He gave me this advice," his companion replied. "Never travel with a friend who deserts you at the approach of danger."
- The moral of this fable is: Misfortune tests the sincerity of friends. (Don't be like Hank Hill's neighbor, Dale, on "King of the Hill," who runs off at the first sign of difficulty. When something goes wrong in our patrol or with our troop, or whatever group we're with, see what we can do to help. A Scout is Loyal.)

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6. BE LOYAL TO YOUR GOALS

- Don considered himself a musician. He played the tambourine in junior high school, but he wasn't very good. He also thought of himself as a singer, but he couldn't have carried a tune in a bucket.
- Years passed, and when all of his school friends were going to college and pursuing careers, Don nurtured his dream of becoming a singer-songwriter by moving to Nashville, Tennessee. Once there, Don made the most of his limited resources. He bought a used car and slept in it. He took a job

working nights so he could visit record companies during the day. He learned to play the guitar. As years passed, he kept writing songs, practicing, and knocking on doors.

– After many years, Don finally got a song on the radio and it made the country hit charts. More time passed and Kenny Rogers recorded one of his songs. “The Gambler” was the title song for one of the best-selling country music albums of that time. Since then, Don Schlitz has had 23 number one songs on the charts and is a member of the Song Writer’s Hall of Fame. As a result of his focused determination, the teenage dreamer had become a success.

– Don had done five things essential to success, without even knowing it. They are the following:

1. Define your goals. Set a goal and picture yourself accomplishing that goal.
 2. Seek out those who know more than you do. Model your efforts on theirs, adjusting and improving as you go.
 3. Pursue your vision with determination. Successful people don’t quit. The biggest difference between those who are successful and those who aren’t is usually not talent, but persistence.
 4. Make an emotional commitment. You will sometimes want to quit after too many losses, but you have to pull yourself together with enthusiasm and commitment.
 5. Review and renew your goals. As you reach your goals, set new ones. Go to the next level.
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7. BE PREPARED FOR WHAT?

– What are the two words inscribed upon the Second Class Badge? “Be prepared.” Our motto.

There is a story of a Scout in Oklahoma. His younger sister went too near a gas heater and instantly her clothes were in flames. The father and this 13-year-old Scout rushed up the stairs to try to help. Remembering his first-aid work, the Scout knew what to do and he did it immediately. He grabbed a small rug and rolled the screaming child in it. He had been prepared. In a moment he had smothered the flames and prevented serious injury to his sister.

– “Thank God my son is a Scout,” the boy’s father told the Scoutmaster. “He knew what to do while I stood confused.”

– That’s what it means to be prepared. Once someone asked Baden-Powell, “Be prepared— for what?” “Why, for any old thing!” he replied.

8. BRAVERY

– Actor and martial arts expert Chuck Norris knows that might does not always mean right. He explains:

Not long ago, after a day of filming my television series, I went alone to a small Texas cafe. As I sat in a corner booth, a large man towered over me and said with an edge to his voice that I was sitting in his booth. I didn’t like his tone or his implicit threat, but I said nothing and moved to another booth. A few minutes later, though, the big fellow was headed back in my direction. Here he comes, I thought, a local tough out to make a name for himself by taking on Chuck Norris in a fight. When he arrived at my new booth, he looked directly at me.

– “You’re Chuck Norris,” he said. I nodded.

- "You could have whipped me good back there a few minutes ago," he said. "Why didn't you?"
 - "What would it have proved?" I asked. He thought that over for a moment and then offered me his hand. "No hard feelings?" he said.
 - "None," I said, and shook his hand. I had avoided a confrontation and made a friend. I had won by losing.
 - The confidence and contentment we feel regarding our own capabilities shouldn't depend on showing them off. Just because we have a skill, doesn't mean we have to prove it to others, and it's often preferable not to.
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9. The BULLFROG

- Once there was a very large green bullfrog who lived in a modest sized pond. Even though many other animals and fish lived around this pond the bullfrog didn't have any friends. You see, the friends he once had were gone. They were tired of his boasting and tried to stay out of his way.
 - This situation changed when the geese began to migrate through the area. Two geese actually became his friends. They spent many a long day visiting, swimming and doing the things friends do. Then one day the two geese told the frog it was time for them to continue their migration. The frog was sad and asked if they could take him with them. He suggested that they let him climb on one of their backs and hang onto their neck. Both geese agreed that he was entirely too fat for one goose to carry.
 - Further saddened, the frog began to think and finally came up with an idea. "Listen," he said, "how about we take a string and each of you take hold of a end with your mouth and bite down hard, then I will bite in the middle of the string and you can fly me between you." The geese pondered the idea and decided to give it a try.
 - All were ready and the geese began to flap and run. The frog hopped along with the string in his mouth until he was lifted from the ground and was airborne. "Oh, what a feeling!" thought the frog. Onward they flew for days on end until they flew over a farmer out in his field.
 - The farmer looked up and upon seeing the geese and frog remarked, "My, my, a flying frog! I wonder who taught those geese to fly such a big frog?" Hearing this the frog said, "I DID!!!" That night the farmer feasted on very large succulent frog legs.
 - We should check our ego, and not let it get so far out of control that we lose our friends or worse yet, end up on someone's dinner plate.
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10. BULL'S-EYE

- Many years ago a young man traveling through the countryside noticed that on many of the barns was a large bull's-eye painted on it with an arrow squarely in the center of the target. He thought he would like to meet the great archer, and asked around until he found out the name of the man, who lived in a nearby village. He introduced himself, and asked the archer for a demonstration of his great skills. "Sure," said the archer, and they walked to the outskirts of town to a barn. He carried his bow and a quiver of arrows and several buckets of paint and some brushes. He selected a barn site, carefully took aim at the barn, and hit it

squarely in the middle. Then he walked up to the arrow, and carefully painted the bull's-eye around the arrow. He then proudly stood back and admired his work.

— Often, things are not as they seem. We need to be careful with our assumptions and not be misled by things as they sometimes appear.

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11. **The CARPENTER**

– An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer of his plans to leave the house-building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by. The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he would build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end his career.

– When the carpenter finished his work, and the builder came to inspect the house, his employer handed the front-door key to the carpenter. “This is your house,” he said, “my gift to you for many years of faithful service!”

– What a shock! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently. Now he had to live in the home he had built none too well.

– So it is with us. We build our lives in a distracted way, reacting rather than acting, willing to put up with less than the best. At important points, we do not give the job our best effort. Then with a shock, we look at the situation we have created and find that we are now living in the house we have built. If we had realized that, we would have done it differently.

– Think of yourself as the carpenter. Think about your house. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Build wisely. This is your life. Even if you live it for only one day more, that day deserves to be lived graciously and with dignity. Your life today is the result of your choices in the past. Your life tomorrow will be the result of your choices you make today.

12. **CHARACTER**

– Part of Scouting's purpose is to build character. One time, a troop was asked if anyone could define character? One Scout said character is thinking good thoughts, and another said it is being a good citizen. Another said character is having good morals, and another said it is being honest and courageous.

– Then a young Scout held up his hand and when called upon said, “Character is what you do when nobody's looking.”

– Think about that for a moment, and see if you don't agree. A good way to measure our own character is to examine what we ourselves do when nobody's looking.

13. **CONFIDENCE**

– If you think you're beaten, you are,
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win, but think you can't.

It's almost for sure, you won't.
– If you think you're losing, you've lost.
For out in the world we find:
Success begins with a person's will.
It's all in your state of mind.
– If you think you're outclassed, you are.
You've got to think high to rise.
You have to stay with it,
In order to win the prize.
– Life's battles don't always go,
To the one with the better plan.
For more often than not, you will win,
If only you think you can.

14. COOPERATION

– We're hopeless at racing,
Me and my friend;
I'm slow at the start,
He's slow at the end.
– He gets a cramp,
I get sore feet,
And neither one of us,
Cares to compete.
– But cooperation's,
A different case;
You should just see us,
In the three-legged race!
– A team that cooperates well together can triumph over the
skills of those who don't.

15. The DEVIL'S SALE

– There is a story that the devil once announced he was going out of business and offered to sell his tools to anyone who would pay the price. On the night of the sale, the tools were all attractively displayed. They were a nasty looking lot: prejudice, hatred, envy, laziness, dishonesty—each marked with a price tag. A little off from the rest lay a harmless looking wedge-shaped tool, much worn, and priced higher than any of the others. “What is it?” someone asked the devil.
– “That's discouragement,” he replied.
– “Why is it priced so high?” the prospective customer asked.
– “Because,” said the devil, “it is more useful to me than any of the others. I can pry open and get inside a person with it when I could never get near him with any of the others. Once inside, I can use the person in whatever way it suits me best. That's why it is so worn, you see. I use it with nearly everybody, because few people yet know that it belongs to me.” It's probably not necessary to add that the devil's price for this tool was so high that there were no bidders. And he is still using it.
– When things aren't going our way and we're experiencing repeated disappointments, we shouldn't let ourselves lose heart and fall prey to feeling lost and defeated. Instead, we should hold our head up and keep a stiff upper lip—put our best foot forward and keep on keeping on. That's the best course of action, to overcome whatever difficulties we're faced with.

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16. **The DOG AND HIS SHADOW**

– A dog, crossing a bridge over a stream with a piece of meat in his mouth, saw his own shadow in the water and took it for that of another dog, with a piece of meat double his own in size. He immediately let go of his own, and fiercely attacked the other dog to get his larger piece from him. He thus lost both: that which he grasped at in the water, because it was a reflection, and his own, because the stream swept it away.

– We shouldn't be greedy, but be content with what we have and if we want or need more, we should do what's necessary and acceptable, and see if we can work for it.)

17. **DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAIL**

– You've failed many times, although you might not remember. You fell down the first time you tried to walk. You almost drowned the first time you tried to swim, didn't you? Did you hit the ball the first time you swung a bat? Heavy hitters, the ones who hit the most home runs, also strike out a lot. Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times, but he also hit 714 home runs. R.H. Macy failed seven times before his store in New York caught on. English novelist John Creasey received more than 700 rejection slips before he published over 600 books.

– We shouldn't be worried about failure. We should be concerned about the chances we miss when we don't even try.

18. **DO THE RIGHT THING**

(This is NOT a true story. It has been circulating for many years, but is just a story and should not be presented as fact.)

– A long time ago, there lived a poor farmer in Scotland who was out working his fields when he heard a cry for help. He went to where the plea for help was coming from and found a boy caught and sinking in a bog. He worked his way through the bog and with the aid of a staff was able to free the boy. After doing so, the farmer went back to work in his fields and didn't think anymore about it.

– The next day, a fine horse-drawn carriage pulled up in front of the farmer's hut. Out of it stepped a well-dressed nobleman who was the father of the boy the farmer had rescued the day before. The grateful father wanted to reward the farmer for rescuing his son. But the farmer, as desperately poor as he was, would not accept money for helping someone in need.

– The nobleman still wanted to reward the farmer for saving his son and was trying to think of some way to do so when the farmer's own son came to the doorway of the hut. Seeing him, the nobleman then made this proposition to the farmer: let him take the boy and he would educate him. The farmer hesitated at first but then finally agreed.

– Through the education that the farmer's son received he became a scientist. The boy grew up to be Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin. A number of years after, the nobleman's own son was stricken with pneumonia which was a death sentence before penicillin. The nobleman's son that was saved was Sir Winston Churchill.

– Each of us, as we live our lives, will have opportunities to help people and will have to make moral decisions like the poor

Scottish farmer did. As badly as he needed money, his personal code that he lived by would not allow him to accept money for helping someone else in need. If he would have taken the money, his son would not have received an education and the world would not have penicillin which has saved tens of millions of lives, not to mention the life of Winston Churchill who led England through the darkest days of World War II against Nazi Germany. The Scottish farmer died without ever knowing that one small moral decision he made changed the world and saved millions of lives.

— As you live your life never underestimate the power of doing the right thing.

19. **The EAGLE AND THE PRAIRIE CHICKEN**

– There once was an Indian brave that was walking down the trail when he discovered an eagle’s egg had fallen out of its nest. He looked up and saw that the nest was too high for him to return the egg. So he placed the egg in a nearby prairie chicken nest. When the egg hatched, the little eagle thought he was a prairie chicken.

– Prairie chickens stay on the ground and eat only worms and grubs. So, as the eagle grew, he ate nothing but worms and grubs and walked around with the other prairie chickens. One day, he looked up in the sky and saw some eagles soaring high above. He asked one of the prairie chickens, “How can they fly up there while we are down here eating worms and grubs?” The prairie chicken answered, “They are the eagles, they can do that, but we must stay down here. We are prairie chickens and that is what we do.” So, the eagle spent the rest of his life flying very little and eating worms and grubs just because he was told that was all he could do.

– The moral of the story is that you should stretch your boundaries and try new things rather than listening to the limitations that others have put on themselves.

20. **An EMPTY POT**

– A Chinese Emperor is dying and needs to pick his successor. It so happened that this Emperor loved gardening, so he decides to let the seeds choose. He calls all the children to the palace and gives each one of them a seed to grow. They are instructed to return in the Spring with their plant. Whoever has tended their plant the best will be named Emperor.

– One little boy, known among the children as an excellent gardener, cannot get his seed to grow. Try as he will, he can’t get the seed to grow. While all of the other children bring huge, beautiful plants when Spring arrives, he has nothing but an empty pot to present to the Emperor. But, no one knew that before presenting the seeds to the children, the Emperor had baked each one, assuring they could never grow. Only one child was honest enough to present an empty pot, and he was rewarded with being named Emperor.

– Honesty is the best policy.

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21. **EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW**

– Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah’s ark.

One: Don't miss the boat.

Two: Remember that we are all in the same boat.

Three: Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.

Four: Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, you might have to do something really big.

Five: Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

Six: Build your future on high ground.

Seven: For safety's sake, travel in pairs.

Eight: Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.

Nine: When you're stressed, float a while.

Ten: Remember, the ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic by professionals.

Eleven: No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

22. The FARMER AND THE STORK

– A farmer placed nets on his newly-sown plowlands and caught a number of Cranes, which came to pick up his seed. With them he also trapped a Stork who earnestly beseeched the Farmer to spare his life.

– “Pray save me, Master,” he said, “and let me go free this once. Besides, I am no Crane, I am a Stork, a bird of excellent character. Look too, at my feathers; they are not the least like those of a Crane.”

– The Farmer laughed aloud and said, “It may be all as you say, but I only know this: I have taken you with these robbers, the Cranes, and you must die in their company.”

– Birds of a feather flock together. This is an example of Guilt by Association. We should evaluate the deeds of those with whom we associate before we hang out with them.)

23. A FOX AND A LEOPARD

– A Fox and a Leopard, resting lazily after a generous dinner, amused themselves by disputing about their good looks. The Leopard was very proud of his glossy, spotted coat and made disdainful remarks about the Fox, whose appearance he declared was quite ordinary. The Fox prided himself on his fine bushy tail with its tip of white, but he was wise enough to see that he could not rival the Leopard in looks. Still he kept up a flow of sarcastic talk, just to exercise his wits and to have the fun of disputing.

– The Leopard was about to lose his temper when the Fox got up, yawning lazily. “You may have a very smart coat,” he said, “but you would be a great deal better off if you had a little more smartness inside your head and less on your ribs, the way I am. That's what I call real beauty.”

– A fine coat is not always an indication of an attractive mind.

24. GIVING

– In Israel, there are two major bodies of water. Both of these bodies of water are fed by the River Jordan. One is the Sea of Galilee, which is full of fish and is surrounded by lush vegetation and trees. It is a living body in every sense. The other is the Dead Sea. There is nothing green there. there are no fish, and the sea is

stagnant and dead.

– The difference is that the Sea of Galilee overflows. For every gallon of water that flows into the sea, a gallon is given up and is passed on downstream. It is constantly renewing itself. It gives as much as it takes. The Dead Sea, on the other hand, because of its geography, only takes. It gives up nothing. The water there is never cleansed; it stagnates and dies, and everything depending on it dies also.

– Some people say that there are two kinds of people in the world: those who constantly give of themselves (who help other people at all times), and those who only take. Which kind are we?

25. The GOLDEN WINDOWS

– It was getting toward the end of summer and I was about to enter the second grade. Each morning all summer long I had noticed a particular house up on a hill about a mile away. This house, I thought, must be spectacular because every morning when I got up, it looked like it had golden windows.

– On this particular morning, I decided to go see the house with golden windows. I packed a lunch and started out on my big journey. Not long after I started, I came to a fence and couldn't resist the temptation to see how far I could walk along the top rail. Then, I continued on my way until I came to a stream, where I stopped for a long while to catch crayfish and minnows. By that time I was hungry and I ate my lunch. Starting up the hill to the house with the golden windows, I happened to see a porcupine. For a long, long time we stared at each other. Finally, I gave up and returned to my quest.

– When I did reach the house with the golden windows, I was very disappointed. There was the house, but instead of being majestic, it was a deserted, rundown shambles. The railings were falling off the porch, the screen door was off its hinges, the yard needed mowing, and the flower garden was overgrown with weeds. I was crushed.

– Sadly, I sat down on the front steps and just happened to gaze back toward my own home. There, in the late afternoon sun, was my house with golden windows!

– Often in life we think that someone else has it far better than we do, or maybe that we should have a position much better than the one we have. But, we really should stop and think about all that we have and be thankful.

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26. GOOD TURN

– Does anyone know when the Boy Scouts of America was started? It was the year 1910. Now for a tougher question: Who started the BSA? Not Baden-Powell. He started Scouting in England. It was an American businessman, William D. Boyce. In 1909, William Boyce was wandering around London and got lost in a dense fog. A young boy found him and led him to his destination. The boy refused to accept a tip from Boyce, saying that he was a Boy Scout. That intrigued Boyce, and he later asked the boy to take him to meet Lord Baden-Powell.

– Because of that meeting, the Boy Scouts of America was officially organized in 1910. There have been more than 93

million Americans involved in the BSA since then.

– The Scout slogan is “Do a Good Turn Daily.” That is what the Boy Scout in 1909 did for William Boyce, and that is what we should always try to do, every day—a Good Turn, without expecting reward.

27. GOOD WOOD

– Before beginning a new construction, a carpenter picks out the best available materials. The wooden boards he selects are the most straight and sound he can find. The quality of his building materials contribute to the quality of his finished product.

– Likewise, our character is the material we’re using to build our future life. Ten to twenty years from now, we as well as others will begin to see what we’ve built. The question is, are the boards we’re selecting straight or is the wood warped?

– Building good character is a central purpose of the Boy Scouts of America.

28. HONEY-POT

– A number of flies were attracted to a jar of honey which had been overturned in a housekeeper’s room, and placing their feet in it, ate greedily. Their feet, however, became so smeared with the honey that they could not use their wings, nor release themselves, and were trapped. Just as they were expiring, they exclaimed, “O foolish creatures that we are, for the sake of a little pleasure we have destroyed ourselves.”

– Pleasure bought with pains, hurts. Here are some small examples: playing in puddles and getting all wet on a cold-weather camping trip, eating a large quantity of powdered drink mix, staying up too late and then oversleeping and missing breakfast.

29. HOT COCOA

– At a jamboree trading post a Scout had spread out his collection of trinkets, including some fine beadwork, neckerchief slides, and patches. At a snack bar nearby, a lady picked up her cup of hot cocoa, but instantly found it too hot to handle. She juggled it for several seconds, and then lost control. The cocoa drenched the Scout’s prize collection of beautiful souvenirs, but, there was no burst of angry protest—not even a rueful glance at the thoroughly ruined display. Instead, this real Scout was instantly on his feet inquiring anxiously of the startled and dismayed lady, “Did you burn yourself, ma’am?”

– See what we mean when we speak of Scout spirit helping us to think of other people before we think of ourselves?

30. The HOUSE OF 1,000 MIRRORS

– Long ago in a small, far away village, there was a place known as the House of 1000 Mirrors. A small, happy little dog learned of this place and decided to visit. When he arrived, he bounced happily up the stairs to the doorway of the house. He looked through the doorway with his ears lifted high and his tail wagging as fast as it could. To his great surprise, he found himself staring at 1000 other happy little dogs with their tails wagging just as fast as his. He smiled a great smile, and was answered with 1000 great

smiles just as warm and friendly. As he left the house, he thought to himself, "This is a wonderful place. I will come back and visit it often."

– In this same village, another little dog, who was not quite as happy as the first one, decided to visit the house. He slowly climbed the stairs and hung his head low as he looked into the door. When he saw the 1000 unfriendly looking dogs staring back at him, he growled at them and was horrified to see 1000 little dogs growling back at him. As he left, he thought to himself, "That is a horrible place, and I will never go back there again."

– All the faces in the world are mirrors. What kind of reflections do you see in the faces of the people you meet?

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31. HOW TO TREAT PEOPLE

– Some of you probably have outdoor clothing you wear that is made from Polartech or Polarfleece material. The company that makes these materials is called Malden Mills. The owner of the company is a deeply religious man named Aaron Feuerstein. On December 31, 1995, his factory caught fire and burned to the ground. The factory employed 3,400 workers and was the main employer for two neighboring towns. The area once had many mills but most had closed and moved to areas where they could pay people less money to work. Mr. Feuerstein felt that people should be paid a decent wage and so he wouldn't move his factory.

– The fire occurred on his 70th birthday. The workers believed it was the end of the line for their jobs. Surely, Mr. Feuerstein would take the \$300 million in insurance money and call it quits. While the smoke was still rising from the charred remains of the fire, Mr. Feuerstein called his workers together at a school gymnasium and spoke to them. They were about to discover what kind of man they worked for.

– He announced that he would not abandon them. He was going to rebuild the factory. He told them that he was keeping all 3,400 of them on the payroll for one month and that each would get a \$275 Christmas bonus. Once the factory was rebuilt, they would get their jobs back. Grown men wept in the audience as he spoke.

– After the first month ended, he paid them for another month. After the second month ended, he paid them for a third month. It cost him \$1.5 million dollars a week to do this. He also paid their hospitalization insurance. His employees responded by salvaging what equipment they could, and in temporary buildings got production up to what it was before the fire, while the new factory was being built.

– Mr. Feuerstein received much praise from around the country, but he said he did only what was the moral and right thing to do. He used his money to support his beliefs in God, rather than make money his God.

– As each of you lives your life try to remember Mr. Feuerstein's example and treat people you encounter with fairness and kindness. You will be amazed at how good you feel and how much better you will be treated in return.

32. I WISH I WAS LIKE THAT BROTHER

– Upon graduation from college a few years back, a young man received a gift from his older brother. It was a shiny new car, the car of his dreams! One morning as he approached the car, he saw a boy of about 12 peering through the windows into the car. The young man recognized him as the boy his parents paid to mow their lawn. Obviously enthralled with the car, the boy hadn't heard the young man approaching. "Is this your car?" the boy asked when he finally noticed the man.

– "Yes, it is," the man responded proudly.

– "Wow! This is a nice car!" remarked the boy. "How much did it cost?"

– "I don't know," the man answered.

– "It's your car, but you don't know how much it cost?"

– "No," admitted the man. "You see, my brother bought it for me."

– "I wish ... I wish ... I wish ..." stuttered the boy. The man thought he was going to say, I wish I had a car like this. "I wish I was like that brother!" finished the boy. Amazed at the boy's response, the young man offered to drive him around the block. The boy hopped in the car and soon asked if the man would drive him home. Thinking that the boy wanted to show off to his friends that he was riding in a new car, and since the boy and his own parents were such good friends, the man agreed.

– They drove more than a few blocks to where the boy lived and as he turned onto the street the man noticed that it wasn't the best-kept neighborhood. The houses were dirty and run down. He pulled up in front of the boy's house. "Please wait!" the boy yelled as he ran into the house. Oh, he's probably going to get his family so he can show off the new car, the man thought.

– The front door opened and out came the boy. In his arms he carried a smaller boy, his younger brother who had been crippled since birth. The older boy brought his brother out to the car, and exclaimed as he hugged him tightly, "See, just like I told you! It's a brand-new car! And someday, I'm going to buy you one just like it!"

– How unselfish this boy was, to be the kind of brother who looked after others before thinking about himself. What kind of Scouts are we? Are we like the older brother?

33. IS SANTA CLAUS A BOY SCOUT?

– Is Santa Claus a Boy Scout? One just needs to examine how he stacks up against the Scout law:

Trustworthy – You certainly can trust that Santa will show up every year.

Loyal – He's very dedicated to his craft and his mission. Imagine the disappointment if he wasn't loyal to his work.

Helpful – He saves many a dad from last minute shopping. Dads are notorious for leaving things to the last minute. Just ask a mom.

Friendly – How many adults would let a zillion kids sit on their lap and listen to what they want, and smile while doing it?

Courteous – He always says thanks for the 62 billion calories he gets in milk and cookies each year.

Kind – Delivering gifts to children is a great act of kindness.

Obedient – I emailed Mrs. Claus on this one. No reply, but seeing he's been married for all those years, I'm going to bet he does what she tells him.

Cheerful – Ho, ho, ho! Need I say more?

Thrifty – Santa makes his own toys. That saves a bundle on shipping alone.

Brave – Would you get in a magic sleigh pulled by reindeer and fly? Me neither.

Clean – I'm not sure how he does it, but that red suit looks great even after the millionth chimney.

Reverent – Santa does his thing on a special night as part of a very religious holiday.

– So, is Santa Claus a Boy Scout. For sure. This time of year no matter what holiday you celebrate, remember that doing your best and living the Scout Oath and Law are what make each of us really a Boy Scout.

34. **KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT**

– A hungry mountain lion came out of the hills, attacked a bull and killed it. As it feasted on its kill, the lion paused from time to time to roar in triumph. A hunter in the area heard the commotion, found the lion and shot him dead.

– The moral of the story is: When we're full of bull, we should keep our mouth shut. In all seriousness, being loud and prideful can very easily work against us.

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